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Storage, in a Nutshell

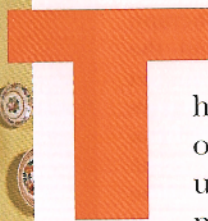
by Mindi Leatham



California Closets



California Closets



The difference between those-of-us-who-are-fine and those-of-us-in-need-of-professional-help may always be debatable. If, however, you've ever organized a search party to find a shoe, been buried under an avalanche of pots and pans or used a mountain of paperwork as a mouse pad, you probably know what it's like to feel a bit crazy and out of control.



Storage, in a Nutshell

Fortunately, there is a cure, and it doesn't involve dream analysis or aromatherapy. Professional organizers and the products they provide can get every room in your home in control—with just an interview from you. Now that's a dream come true. And, because of all the time and money you'll be saving, you can stop to smell the roses.

Dana Korey of *Away with Clutter* is all too familiar with the loss disorganization can cause: "The *Wall Street Journal* reported that American executives spend an average of six weeks per year searching through messy desks.

Organizing Inside Out states that crisis replacement purchases of lost or damaged items amount to 15 to 20 percent of Americans' annual budgets!"

The organizational gurus' secret to preventing you from becoming another disorderly statistic is to take into account what your unique, natural inclinations are, and to build a system around how you behave. Many companies offer custom-built, adjustable systems, tailored to hold specific items at the height level at which you need them. Others offer modular shelves, drawers and cabinets that may be mixed and arranged according to your desires. Following is *Décor and Style's* room-by-room guide to the storage products that will transform a house's six most common problem areas—the bedroom closet, bathroom, home office,

Closet Factory





kitchen, family room and garage—into department store look-alikes.

Bedroom Closet

“The master bedroom closet is often the most difficult area of the home to organize,” says Mike DeHart of California Closets. “It’s especially challenging when it’s shared by two people.” Of course, it’s a challenge that California Closets can handle: “First, we measure the closet space

and look over what items will be stored there. We consult with our clients about what materials they want, how much hanging space, drawer space or shelving they prefer, and what kind of accessories they have. We create a design that is tailored to their specific needs.”

Some of the most highly desired, custom-built closet materials include precision crafted wood, and wood veneer, with detailed crown molding and raised panel faces on drawer and cabinet fronts. “Our custom cabinet shop, Orion, can emulate the look of a Tommy Bahama store or a Ralph Lauren Polo shop,” says Tom Clark of The Closet Works.

Studio Becker Wardrobe systems, available at Kitchen Expo in La Jolla, also offer showroom-quality design. “The system helps you to create your own custom wardrobe tailored to fit your needs and lifestyle,” says



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mends oversized, oval-shaped, chrome or brass-plated steel rods with handles and drawer pulls to match.

“What most people really need is more space for items that don’t hang well,” Clark says. Knits and silks, for example, tend to stretch over time if they are hung. They should be folded and stored on a shelf, in a cubby or in a drawer. Shoe storage can also be tricky. Clark recommends keeping shoes off of the floor, where they are hard to reach and may get trampled. “We always place shoe racks, shelves or cabinets at about waist height,” he says.

Although shelves and cubbies are good for items that are frequently used, drawers and cabinets are preferred because they provide better protection against dust and can be lined with cedar to ward off moths. Adjustable shelves and compartments inside make it easy to accommodate large or small items. Lucite or even etched glass drawer and cabinet fronts are convenient because they allow you to see what is inside without opening them.

Luxurious accessory storage options include the following: velvet-lined jewelry drawers with compartments and ring-

Dirke Johnson of Kitchen Expo. “It’s like turning your closet into a boutique.”

A smart way to maximize hanging space in the closet is to place a rod for hanging items beneath an existing one. “Shirts that hang on a top rod don’t reach all the way to the floor,” says Greg Smith of Closet World. “We fill the empty space with another rod for more short articles.” Closets with at least a nine-foot-high ceiling may have a third rod added, with a pull-down lever for easy access. Smith explains, “A hardware mechanism makes it easy to pull the clothes down to a reachable level when you need them and send them back up when you’re finished.” Because of their durability and beauty, Elaine Rini of Closet Factory recom-





Closet World



Hold Everything



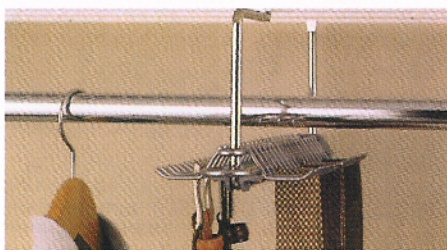
Shelves to Drawers



rolls; roll-out tie, belt, and scarf organizers; cap racks; and wall slats with bins that can be rearranged, perfect for storing everyday items like wallets and sunglasses. For closets that have enough space, packing islands provide both luggage storage and a countertop for folding. Closet World offers Security Toe Kicks: floor level secret compartments that pull out for storage of valuables.

With the right containers, even the-

The Container Store



Hold Everything



laundry in your closet can look good. "I had a client who liked to throw his laundry on the floor," says Korey. "Of course, it drove his wife crazy that he wouldn't take it to the bin 20 feet away. Our solution was to find a beautifully crafted, oversized basket that matched the décor of the bedroom, and put it where he usually left his laundry. He didn't have to change his habit, and his wife's sense of aesthetics

was satisfied." Other great solutions include chrome, wicker or white wire baskets that slide out from under a shelf. Another new option, California Closets' new tilt-down cabinets, store a hamper behind doors, keeping laundry out of sight but easily accessible.

Bathroom

The bathroom is particularly at risk for clutter because it may be one of the smallest, but also one of the most frequently used, rooms in your home. The common disaster zones include cabinets, countertops and showers. Storage experts solve the case of the mysterious cabinet contents by installing rollout shelves that allow you to see items stored in the back without having to crawl inside. When multiple users' products don't allow for toilet paper storage inside cabinets, American Standard's hidden compartment under the sink, or a decorative cylinder container both do the job. Countertop clutter can be eliminated with custom-built vanities, with holders and compartments for cosmetics, or a vanity chair with a drawer in the seat. Mike Mcallister of Hold It uses heavy gauged stainless steel hooks and multi-tiered shower caddies in clean

designs to keep towels, clothes and shower accessories neat. For a more natural look, Hold Everything's Sumantri Teak Bath Collection, carved in concentric rectangles, is extremely durable and water-resistant.

Home Office

Whether you use your home office to instant message your friends or to achieve high business expectations, the materials, design and accessories should make you feel comfortable and increase productivity.

Professional organizers can custom-build home office desks, shelves and accessories in a wide range of beautiful materials and colors. Wood and wood veneer, in everything from walnut, to pear wood to African wenge, are often combined with durable, high-pressure laminate surfaces. Cabinets and drawers may have raised panels or glass fronts with square, arched or cathedral frames. For the most progressive look, Mcallister recommends chrome-plated refined industrial desks and shelving. "Chrome has been growing in popularity for decades," he says, "and it's expected to become even more commonly used."

Phil Jennings of Next/Design Team says, "Many of the high-end homes around San Diego are opting for the dark, rich, dramatic look with valances, crown molding and an island theme. Hardware can be used to jazz it up or tone it down. We offer a

broad range of choices from Europe, including stainless steel and brushed chrome."

Well-designed desks offer more than a rectangular workspace and a few drawers. Next/Design Team's cockpit desk shape and strategic pigeonholes allow you to work comfortably and quickly without having to reach or rise to get up for what you need. Built-in filing systems and CD and floppy disk racks put an end to rummaging through drawers. Rollout shelves for printers, scanners and other accessories, as well as wire management systems, save time and keep everything hidden while not in use. "I recommend an ergonomic keyboard mechanism with a mouse tray and full tilt capabilities that can be tucked under the desktop," says Jennings. "We also like to use brackets to mount computer towers to walls. They are easily accessible there, and yet they don't take up work space."

Korey likes to free up work space in other creative ways: "There are interesting telescopic gadgets that mount to the walls and hold monitors, telephones and just about everything else. They're nice to use because you don't have to keep all of those things on your desk, and you can push them out of the way when you're not using them."

Kitchen

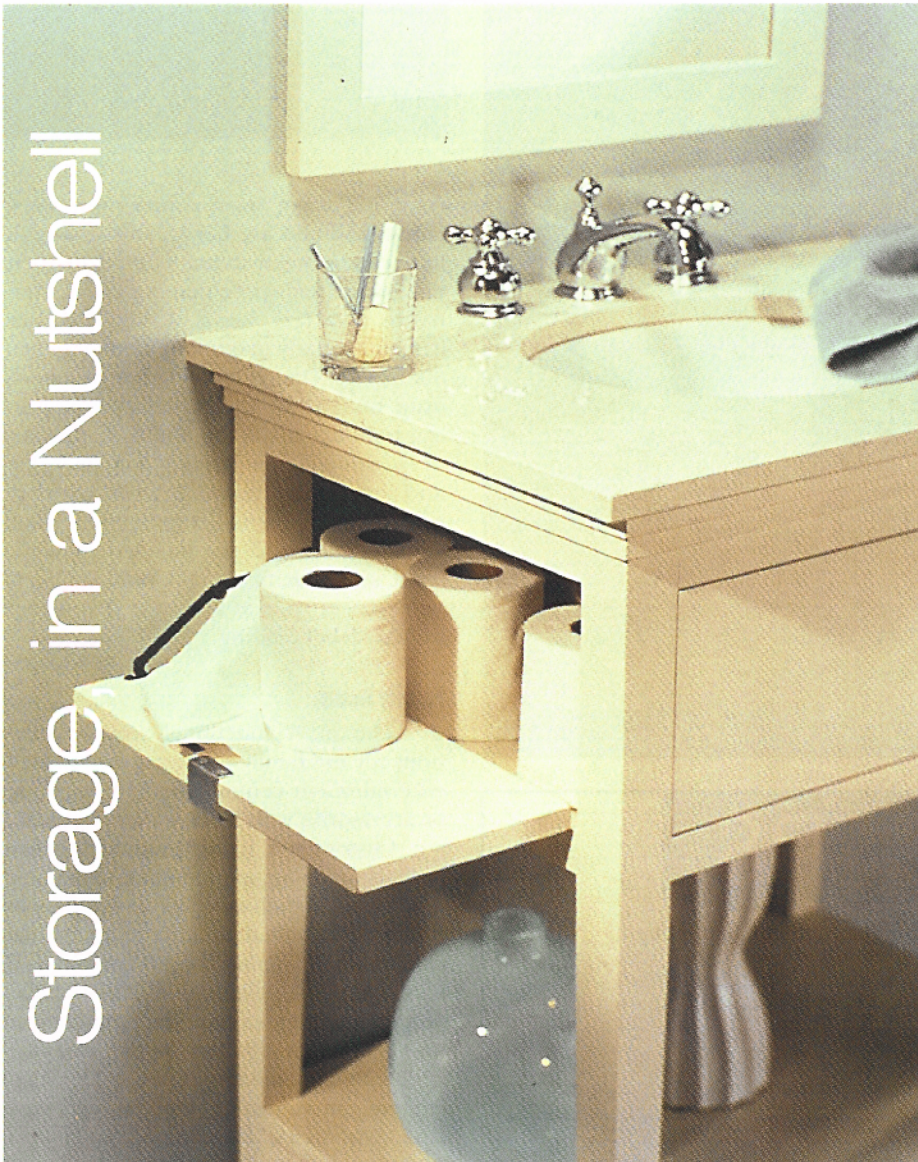
Your ideal kitchen pantry, cabinets and drawers are now possible, thanks to new products designed with the unique sizes and shapes of commonly used products in mind.

The perfect pantry consists of rollout shelves, produce drawers with Lucite fronts, slide-out wicker or stainless steel baskets, and wall slats with movable hooks for hanging large utensils and storage bins. Wine, soda and canned good racks arranged on rollout shelves prevent bottles and cans from tipping or rolling, and make it easy to organize according to expiration dates. Holders for paper goods and plastic utensils installed on the insides of pantry doors eliminate messy stacks on shelves.

The latest cabinet and drawer options make organizing kitchen supplies painless. Diner-style aluminum panels that flip closed make it possible to hide appliances without unplugging them or

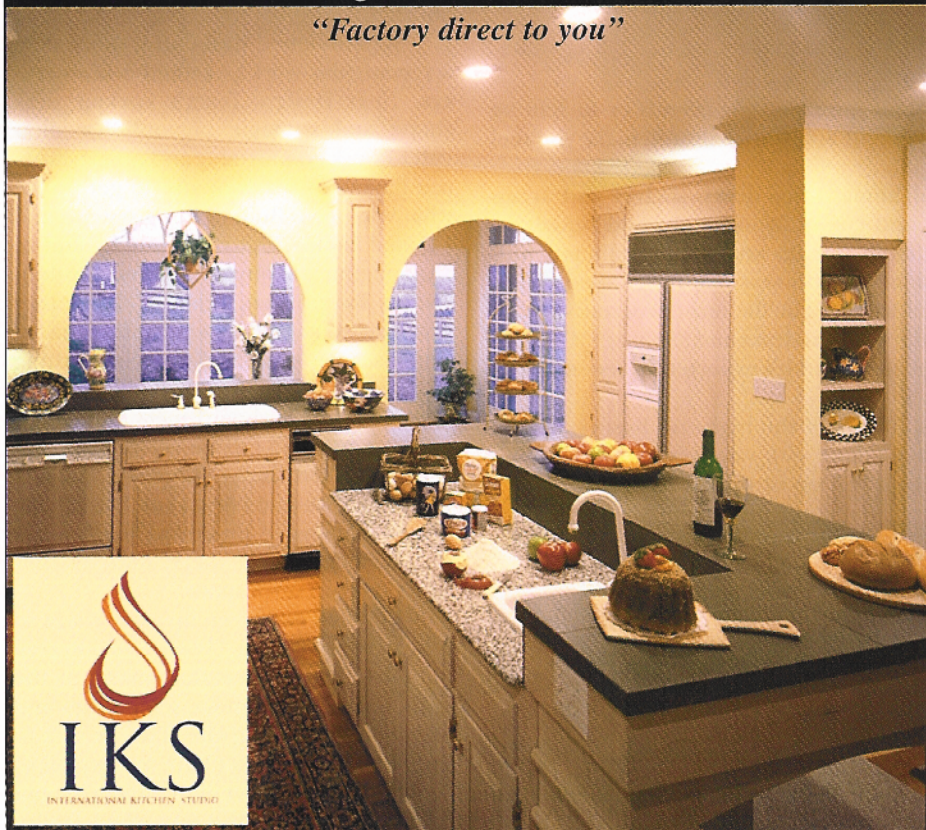
American Standard

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removing them from countertops. New corner cabinets are being built without a false rail between them. The result is an efficiently used space that is a good alternative to a lazy Susan. A single corner drawer similarly maximizes storage space. Shelves to Drawers' new line of heavy-duty, pulled out to their full extension, can hold up to 100 lbs, and their double-deep drawers are perfect for stackable and oversized items. Drawer dividers make it possible to store serving trays, cookie sheets and pot lids vertically, for quick selection. Spice rack drawer inserts hold jars in rows at an angle that allows for easy label reading.

Family Room

The most functional storage solutions for the family room are customized entertainment centers and fun furniture or accessories with storage components.

Customized floor-mounted storage systems, with adjustable glass, wood or wood veneer shelves, come in a variety of designs and materials, such as traditional cherry wood, contemporary maple and industrial chrome designs. "Entertainment centers may even serve as part office with different stations and supply compartments for watching TV, working on the computer and sewing," says Rini. Motorized entertainment centers reveal or hide your television, stereo or DVD player with a push of a remote con-

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a Nutshell



trol button and are recommended by Bridget Fieldman, ASID, of Space San Diego. Other organizers-in-disguise include an ottoman with a hidden drawer for blankets and side pockets for magazines, and a picture frame with storage for remote controls and magazines behind it.

Garage

The garage is often the most neglected area of the home, even though it usually contains food storage, expensive tools and valuable sports equipment. Experts agree that cabinets, unique racks and workbenches will extend the life of these items and allow you to make the best use of them.

"Cabinets with cedar lining and adjustable hanging rods and shelves can be used to store anything from camping gear to food storage," says Clark. "Typically, the cabinets are eight feet tall and two feet deep, so that awkward items, such as fishing poles, still fit. We like to wall-mount them so that cleaning the floor is a cinch."

Workbenches with plenty of compartments in the drawers, large butcher blocks or laminate countertops, and pegboard tool storage are Clark's recommendation for an efficient workshop environment. Pegboards can even be used to store large garden tools such as shovels and rakes.

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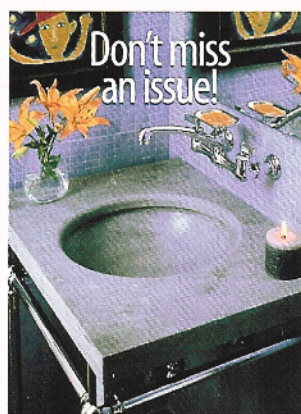
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Large seasonal sports equipment, like snowboards and surfboards, are best stored flat against the garage wall on special racks. Equipment that is used more often, such as bicycles and golf clubs, is more conveniently stored on schoolyard-type racks. There are countless kinds of storage bins for baseball bats, rollerblades or basketballs, including Korey's favorite: clear nylon bags. Such bags are stored on a wood frame and have a drawstring, making them easy to remove, close and throw (still in the bag) into the car.

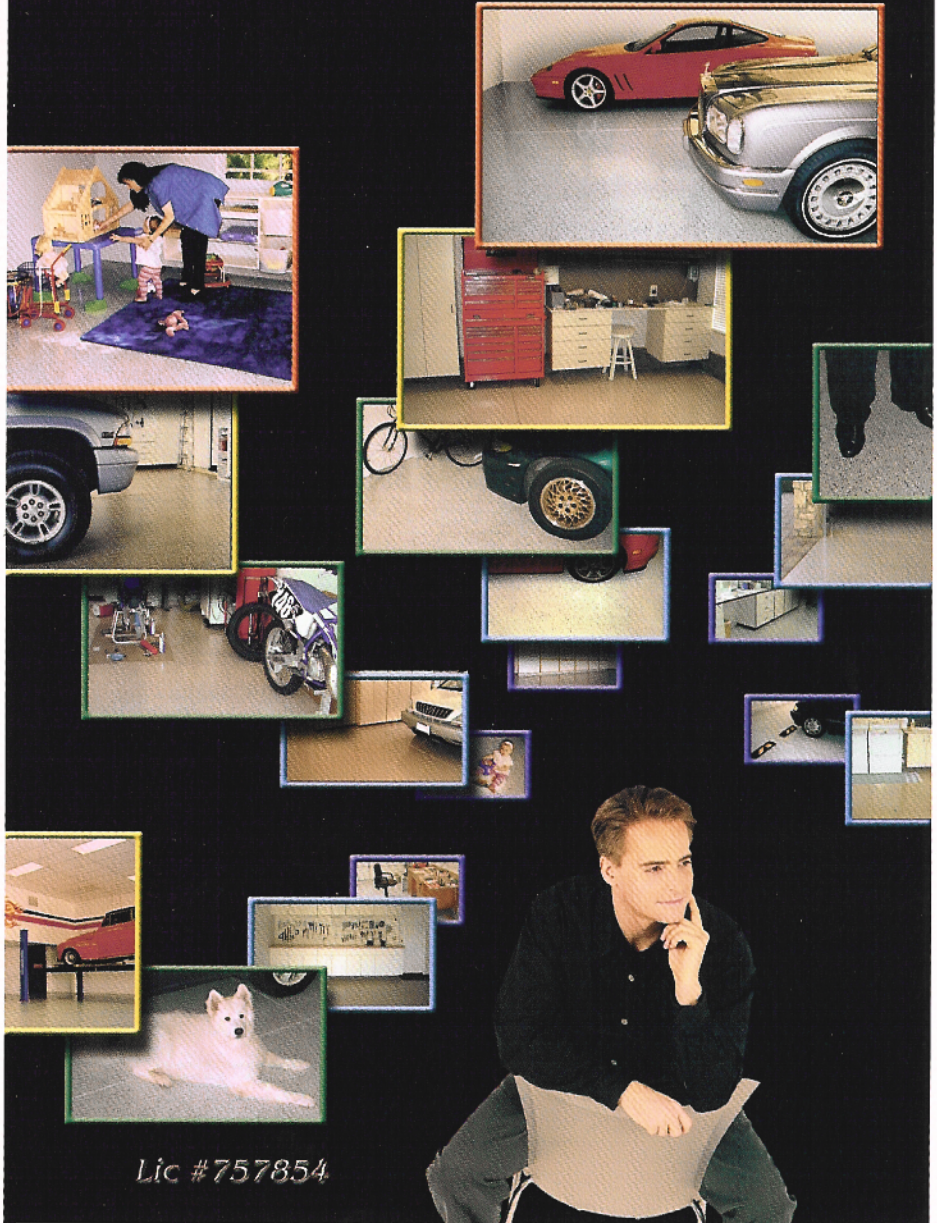
Smart storage products can really improve the quality of your home and life. Lemons says, "When I talk to customers that we installed solutions for, whether it was a week or a decade ago, they tell me that it was the best investment they made for their home. They often say, 'I can't believe I waited so long, because being organized makes life so much easier.'" ■

resources

- Advanced Coating Concepts (866) 4-MY-GARAGE
- Away with Clutter (858) 481-9191
- California Closets (619) 441-0882
- Closet Factory (858) 554-0050
- The Closet Works (619) 230-1400
- Closet World (800) 574-9225
- First Glass (800) 945-8228
- Hold Everything (800) 421-2285
- Hold It (858) 565-7500
- Kitchen Expo (858) 456-0050
- Next/Design Team (858) 866-1600
- Office Furniture Warehouse (858) 271-4344
- Shelves to Drawers (858) 273-5679
- Space San Diego (619) 518-0454
- Studio Becker (858) 483-1605
- Taunton's Home Storage Idea Book*, Joanne Kellar
Bouknight, Taunton Press, Newtown, CT, 2002.

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